



# ***PRESS RELEASE***

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## **City, Metro Region Welcome New Fire Protection Vessel to Baltimore's Harbor**

### *Vessel Named for City Fire Chief and Statewide Advocate*

**Baltimore, MD** – With the sound of crashing champagne bottles and historic Fort McHenry National Park, where this county once defended its homeland against an invading British army as a backdrop, the city christened and introduced its new Regional Response Watercraft and Fireboat, the *John R. Frazier* early Saturday afternoon.

Along with the Frazier family, Mayor Sheila Dixon, Governor Martin O'Malley and Congressman Elijah Cummings, the Baltimore City Fire Department officially commissioned its brand new fireboat, which will serve, protect and secure the citizens of this city and region with the same spirit shown by America's defenders almost 194 years ago. The launching of the Frazier symbolizes almost seven years worth of work and partnership between Baltimore's metropolitan region and its state and federal representatives.

The new 87-foot, \$6.25 million Regional Response Watercraft was purchased with grant funds from the US Department of Homeland Security Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI), received by Central Maryland Region's Urban Area Working Group (UAWG) over the past three years. One of 46 federally designated Urban Areas, Baltimore's UAWG is comprised of Baltimore and Annapolis Cities, as well as Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Carroll, Harford, and Howard Counties. With increased protection of the Port of Baltimore paramount and a need for fire improved protection throughout the Chesapeake Bay region, the vessel became a reality through the true collaborative efforts of these seven jurisdictions.

"In today's new world of increased security concerns and ever tightening budget strings, for large urban areas like Baltimore's, the best way to secure and protect the public is through true cooperation by all jurisdictions that make up a metropolitan region," said Mayor Sheila Dixon at today's event. "This newest tool in our homeland security arsenal is a great example of what can be accomplished."

Named after one of Baltimore's unsung heroes, the *John R. Frazier* is the city's first new fireboat entering into service in more than four decades and replaces the aging *Mayor J. Harold Grady*, originally commissioned in the 1950's.

Battalion Chief John R. Frazier, who served for over 53 years in the Baltimore City Fire Department, passed away in April of this year. Throughout his almost six decade career, Frazier rose through the ranks as a

firefighter and by the 1980s began serving as the fire department's legislative liaison in Annapolis. In that role, he became a tireless leader in designing Maryland's current system of emergency medical services and was eventually appointed to the Maryland Emergency Medical Services Board by then governor Parris N. Glendening.

Frazier was also instrumental in crafting the legislation for Maryland's 508 Fire, Ambulance and Rescue Fund, better known as the Senator Amoss Fund. The Amoss Fund today has become a crucial source of funding for volunteer fire service organizations around the state, which helps them build new or improve existing fire stations in order to keep up with the modern demands of community based fire protection.

"Chief Frazier was not just a hero for Baltimore City, not just a champion in modernizing Maryland's EMS services and not just a crusader for our state's volunteer firefighters," remembered Governor O'Malley. "He was also a friend who always had advice to share, all of it good. There is no better way to honor such a good man than to give the fireboat for which he so tirelessly worked the name John R. Frazier."

The build contract for the *John R. Frazier* was awarded in August 2005. Design and construction of the new boat began in late February 2006. Built in Ontario, Canada the boat was sailed down Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway to Baltimore and the fire department took delivery in June 2007. The Frazier is 87 feet long, has four water cannons with a pumping capacity of 7,000 gallons a minute, and a top speed of 16 knots.

"This new fireboat will help us protect and secure the Central Maryland Region, Baltimore City and the Port of Baltimore for the next 50 years," said Fire Chief William J. Goodwin during the ceremony. "It will not only keep safe the citizens of Baltimore, it will provide service to families up and down the Chesapeake Bay and I want to thank all of our federal, state and local partners who worked so hard to make this day reality"

Also on hand for today's event were representatives from the offices of Maryland Senators Barbara Mikulski and Ben Cardin, members of the Baltimore City State Delegation, City Council, representatives from various county executive offices and many other locally elected public officials from around the Central Maryland Region.

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